

Written Testimony Submitted for the House Appropriations Committee
Testimony of Emma Andrews
HB 609 –The Library Workers Empowerment Act
February 13th, 2024

SUPPORT

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair Chang, and Members of the House Appropriations:

My name is Emma Andrews, and I am a Library Associate II with Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. I work at the Mountain Road branch, where I help serve the community of Mountain Road, and the patrons that rely on us. In collective bargaining, I am looking for security. I want to be able to plan for my future, and to know that I will have a voice in how it plays out. Having that sense of security to actually plan for a future would be something I've never had before.

One of the biggest issues that affect me directly are ones of equity and how administration often fails to follow through on commitments made to staff to address issues. Even the easiest of fixes get tossed aside in favor of initiatives that may look attractive, but ultimately do not make us safer. We often speak about trust and communication but do nothing to foster either. Our marginalized staff are often working in an environment where we are left asking in futility for help.

The effect of this is stress, burnout, and constant worry about the stability of our positions. When it comes down to it, we need the ability to form a union. Every one of us deserves a seat at the table. Every one of us needs the right to advocate for each other and ourselves. Every one of us should have the right to stand together in solidarity to work together to improve all of our lives. Library workers deserve nothing different than any other worker. We don't want to be treated differently, we just want to be treated equally. I urge you to pass this legislation, and to give our library workers the empowerment they deserve.

Emma Andrews
Library Associate II
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